

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 24, 2017 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2

Chairman Pritchard called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Regular members present: Kane, Munn, Steinfeld, Zod
Alternate members present: Fitzgerald
Excused Absence: Pritchard, Tarbox
Staff present: Jones, Glemboski, Silsby

Acting Chairman Steinfeld appointed Fitzgerald to sit for Pritchard.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. December 13, 2016 – Special CIP meeting

MOTION: To adopt the minutes of December 13, 2016 – Special CIP meeting

Motion made by Kane, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously, as amended

2. December 13, 2016

MOTION: To adopt the minutes of December 13, 2016

Motion made by Kane, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously, as written

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS - None

IV. SUBDIVISIONS

1. Northwoods Subdivision – Final Release of Bond

Staff stated that all public improvements and the open space were accepted one year ago. Public Works Department is in agreement with Planning Staff that the final \$4,000 performance bond can now be released.

MOTION: To release the \$4,000 remaining performance bond for the Northwoods Subdivision.

Motion made by Kane, seconded by Zod, so voted unanimously

V. SITE PLANS - None

VI. OLD BUSINESS - None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Referral from the Zoning Board of Appeals for a Public Hearing on January 25, 2017 – ZBA#16-15 – 185 Fort Hill Road, Town of Groton/Owner, CT Technical High School System/Applicant

Staff reviewed a map showing the location of the proposed 2 signs, as she explained the specifics of each variance. The 2 signs would be for Grasso Tech, one of which would include an LED digital message board. Details were given about the new Grasso Tech school building.

Concerns were raised about the glow and size of the digital sign (Sign A), as well as it being off site and overshadowing the existing Sutton Park sign. There was a consensus that the digital sign should be scaled down in line with the existing sign for Grasso Tech.

MOTION: The Planning Commission recommends that Sign A be scaled down in size to be comparable to the existing sign. Additionally, the Board should consider the need or benefit of the LED sign, which may be distracting to motorists.

Motion made by Kane, seconded by Munn, so voted unanimously

2. Referral from the Town of Ledyard for a Public Hearing on January 26, 2017 – Zoning Regulation Amendment to Chapters 2, 6-16

Staff does not feel there is any impact to the Town.

The Planning Commission had no comment.

3. Referrals from the City of New London for Public Hearings on February 16, 2017
 - a. Zoning Map Amendment

Staff stated that these changes should have no conflict with the Town of Groton.

The Planning Commission had no comment.

- b. Zoning Text amendment to Section 560 (Light Industrial Office District)

The Planning Commission had no comment.

4. Review of Northeast Corridor (NEC) Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement

Staff referred to the Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Preferred Alternative and the I95 Corridor and upgrades that could be done. Some members felt that this could be a good thing for the Town of Groton since a new train station is proposed. Fitzgerald referred to a regional meeting whereby many people were objecting to this project.

Staff noted that the Town Council reviewed this project last week and had no comment. Staff felt it was important to note that at this point, there is no detailed plan, just a general map of the possible route. Zod feels that details will be crucial going forward.

The Planning Commission had no comment, at this time.

5. Election of Officers

This item was tabled until the next regular meeting.

6. Report of Commission

Kane raised concerns about the lights at the Paintball Facility on Noank-Ledyard Road that are visible from I95. He referred to sign regulations and feels that the lights may be a sign. There was a consensus by the Planning Commission to ask Zoning Officer Kevin Quinn for a written opinion.

An inquiry was made about 420 Long Hill Road, specifically about wood chips being used as fill.

It was noted that the Crystal Lake construction project will begin next week.

Staff stated that the Town's new Code Enforcement Officer/Planner I, Thomas Zonarini, will begin work next week.

7. Report of Commission - None

8. New Applications - None

VIII. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN - None

IX. REPORT OF STAFF

Staff referred to the Connecticut Federation of Planning and Zoning Agencies quarterly newsletter, pointing out that the Annual Conference will be held on March 23, 2017 at the Aqua Turf in Plantsville, CT. Board members should notify town staff if interested in attending.

Staff stated that a Joint Land Use Study is being done with the Navy Base and Towns on the Thames River, to look at land use that is compatible with the Base. The study is coordinated by the Southeastern CT Council of Governments.

Staff stated that Town Manager Mark Oefinger will be retiring this coming March. A firm has been hired to conduct a search for the new Town Manager. As part of the search, interviews are being conducted to determine what elements are important for the position before the hiring process begins. A questionnaire is available on the Town's website for anyone interested in submitting feedback.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 7:53 pm was made by Zod, seconded by Kane, so voted unanimously.

Margil Steinfeld, Vice Chairman/Secretary
Planning Commission

Prepared by Robin M. Silsby
Office Assistant II